The BLACK BOX

By E. PHILLIPS OPPENHEIM

Author of "The Moving Finger," "The Prince of Sinners," "Anna, the Adventuress," etc.

Novelized from the motion picture drama of the same name produced by the Universal Film Manufacturing Company. Illustrated with pho-tographs from the motion picture production.

must have slipped from his pocket.

You see what is written on it?-

Quest took it in his hand. "Say, this ought to be interesting,"

They passed into the library

and caught them up just as they were

opening the book underneath the elec-

"See here what I've found!" he ex

He spread out the piece of paper-it

Professor Ashleigh, after being bit-

ten by the anthropoid, rapidly devel

oped hydrophobia of a serious nature.

After treatment with a new serum the

patient was relieved of the hydropho-

ble symptoms, but to my horror this

possessed at times of all the characteristics of the brutal anthropoid-

cunning, thievery, brutality. I do not

know what may come of this. I hesi-

course, in the interests of humanity,

(Signed) JAMES MERRILL, M. D.

Editor's Note-Just as we go to

press, a cable announces the terrible

death of Doctor Merrill, the writer of

the above notes. He was attacked by

wild animals, whilst alone in a South

American jungle, and torn to pleces.

There was a queer little silence

among the company. No one seemed inclined for speech. They looked at

one another in dumb, wondering hor-

from his pocket and with a turn of his

wrist forced the lock of the diary. They all watched him with fascinated

eyes. It was something to escape from their thoughts. They leaned over as he spread the book out be-

fore him. Those first two sentences

were almost in the nature of a dedica-

For ten years I have protected my

ness, my reputation. This book, even

though it be too late to help me, shall

Quest closed the volume. "French," he decided, "we must find

men search the house and grounds im-

The inspector left the room like a

dazed man. They could hear him giv-ing orders outside.

"Just one page more!"

Quest hesitated for a moment. Then

he turned it over. All three read

Ten years of horror, struggling all

the while to keep him from that other

self, that thing of bestiality, to keep his horrible secret from the world, to

cover up his crimes, even though their shadow should rest upon me-

Now Sanford Quest has come. Will

have the trath here. Wait!" He strode hastily to the door. French

and one of the plain-clothes men were

descending the stairs.
"Well?" Quest asked, breathlessly.

"The professor is not in the house," French reported. "We are going to

Quest returned to the library.

Lenora clung to his arm. The diary

Quest opened the volume slowly. Again they all read together:

The evil nature is growing stronger

every day. He is developing a cort of feroclous ourning to help him in

ened room and one can see nothing but the hands and the nyes; some-

times if he closes his eyes, only the hands.

"Mrs. Rheinholdt!" Quest muttered The door was suddenly opened and

"Berten!" he exclaimed, tersely,
"You haven't found him?" Quest

"We've searched every room, every cupboard, every sorap of the cellar in the place," he announced. "We've been into every corner of the grounds, searched it all backwards and for-

French shook his head.

search the grounds."

lay still upon the table.

Will you have your

clear my reputation.

the professor.

mediately?"

again:

Then Quest drew a penknife

fitted exactly into the empty space.

They all read together:

ought to take.

he remarked. "Come along."

Diary of John Craig."

tric lamp.

zine?"

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SYNOPSIS thoughts were framing themselves in Sanford Quest, master criminologist of the world, finds that in bringing to justice Macdougal, the murderer of Lord Ashleigh's daughter, he has but just begun a He-and-death struggle with a mysterious master criminal. In a hidden hat in Professor Ashleigh's garden he has seen an ape skeleton and a living creature, half monkey, half man, destroyed by fire. In his rooms have appeared black boxes containing notes, signed by a pair of armless hunds. Laura and Lenora, his assistants, suspect Craig, the professor's servant, of a double murder. The black boxes continue to appear in uncanny fashion. Craig, captured escapes to Port Said. Quest and his party follow, and beyond into the desert. They are captured by Mongars, escape with Craig as their captive, and turn him over to Inspector French in San Francisco. He escapes in a train wreck, outgenerals his pursuers, and goes back to New York, where he dies while Quest is attempting to hypnotize him into confession. the brains of both of them. there came a startling and in its way a dramatic interlude. Through the empty house came the ringing of the electric bell from the front door, shrill and insistent. Without a moment's hesitation, Quest hurried out and French followed him. On the doorsten was another surprise. Lenora and Laura were there, the former carrying a small, black-bound volume. "Don't be cross," she begged quickly. "We just had to come. Look! We picked this up undernenth the chair where Craig was sitting.

FIFTEENTH INSTALLMENT

CHAPTER XXXV.

The first shock was over. Craig's body had been removed, and the girls had taken Mary, half stunned with grief, to their room. French and Quest were left alone.

"That is some disappointment," the former remarked, gloomily.

"It is a disappointment," Quest said, slowly, "which may clear the way to bigger things."

'What's in your mind now?" French inquired. -

Quest shook his head.

"A turmoil. First of all, where is the professor?"

"Must have scooted right away home," French suggested. "He was looking pretty sick all the time. Guess it must have been a powerful shock for him, and he isn't so young as he used to be."

"Give me that paper of Craig's again," Quest asked

The inspector produced the document from his inner pocket, and Quest, stretching it out upon his knee, read it word for word.

"Never to communicate or to have anything to do with anyone of the name of Ashleigh, eh?" he remarked, as he handed it back again. a queer provision, that, French." Tve been thinking that myself," the

inspector admitted. Quest glanced at the clock.

"Well," he said, "if you're ready,

inspector, we'll be getting along." The two men drove to the outskirts of the city almost in silence. The professor's house seemed more than ever deserted as they drew up at the front door. They entered without ringing and crossed the hall towards the library. On the threshold Quest paused and held up his finger.

"Someone is in there," he whispered, stepping quickly forward. "Come!"

He threw open the door. The room was empty, yet both Quest and French were conscious of a curious convic-tion that it had been occupied within the last few seconds.

"Queer, but it seemed to me I heard someone," French muttered.

"I was sure of it," Quest replied. They stood still for a moment and listened. The silence in the empty house was almost unnatural. Quest turned away with a shrug of the

any rate," he said, "Craig's dy ing thoughts must have been truthful. Come.'

He led the way to the fireplace, went down on his knees and passed his hands over the brick.. The third one he touched, shook. He tapped it-without a doubt it was hollow With his penknife he loosened the mortar a little and drew it out easily. The back was open Inside was the black box.

"Craig's secret at last!" French muttered, hoarsely. "Bring it to the light, quick!"

They were unemotional men, but the moment was supreme. The key to the mystery of those tragical weeks was there in their hands! Their eyes almost devoured those few hastly scrawled words buried with so much

See Page 62, January Number, American Medical Journal, 1905. They looked at one another. They repeated vaguely this most commonplace of messages. As the final result of their strenuous enterprise, these cryptic words seemed pitifully inadequate. Quest's face darkened. He crumpled the paper in his fingers. "There must be some meaning in this," he muttered. "It can't be alto-

gether a fool's game we're on. Wait.'
He moved towards a table which usually stood against the wall, but which had obviously been dragged out recently into the m'ddle of the

out recently into the m'ddle of the woom. It was covered with bound volumes. Quest glanced at one and exclaimed softly:

"American Medical Journal, 1905: Wrench, there's something in this measus, after all."

He turned over the pages rapidly. Then he came to a stop. Page the was there; page 67 had been nearly removed with a pitr of scincors.

"The professor!" he cried. "The professor's been at work here!"

The , wo men stood looking at one another across the table. Stronge

wards. There's no sign of the profes-

Quest pocketed the dlary. You're perfectly certain that he is no n this house or anywhere upon the premises?"

Certain sure!" French replied. Quest shrugged his shoulders. Well, we'd better get back," he said,

They were on the point of starting. the chauffeur with his hand upon the starting handle, French with the steering wheel of the police car already in his hand. And then the little party seemed suddenly turned to stone. For a few breathless seconds not one of them moved. Out into the clammy night air came the echoes of a hideous, inhuman, blcod-curdling scream. Quest was the first to re-cover himself. He leaped from his seat and rushed back across the empty hall into the study, followed a little way behind by French and the others. An unsuspected panel door others. An unsuspected panel door which led into the garden stood slightly afar. The professor, with his hand on the back of a chair, was staring at the fireplace, shaking as though with some horrible ague, his face dis-

torted, his body curiously hunched He seemed suddenly to have dropped his humanity, to have fallen back into the world of some strange creatures. He heard their footsteps, but he did not turn his head. hands were stretched out in front of him as though to keep away from his sight some hateful object.
"Stop him!" he cried. "Take him

French lingered behind for a moment a y! It's Craig—his spirit! He came to me in the garage, he followed me through the grounds, he mocked at me when I hid in the tree. He's there now, kneeling before the fire-place. Why can't I kill him! He claimed. "It was just by the side of the wall there. Where's that magais coming! Stop him, someone!"

No one spoke or moved: no one, indeed, had the power. Then at last Quest found words.

"There is no one in the room, pro fessor," he said, "except us."

The sound of a human voice seemed to produce a strange effect. The professor straightened himself, shook his head, his hands dropped to his side, ghastly pale, but his smile was once mild-mannered, humane man seems more the smile of the amiable naturalist. "My friends," he said, "forgive me,

am very old, and the events of these last few hours have unnerved me. Forgive me." tate to put even these words on to paper. I am doubtful as to what He groped for a moment and sank into a chair. Quest fetched a decan-

ter and a glass from the sideboard, poured out some wine and held it to his lips. The professor drank it eag-"My dear friend," he exclaimed, "you have saved me. I have something to tell you, something I must tell

to your rooms." "As you please," Quest answered, calmfy.

you at once, but not here. I loathe this place. Let me come with you

He gripped Quest's arm. In silence they passed from the room, in silence they took their places once more in the automobiles, in silence they drove without a pause to Quest's rooms. The professor made his way at once to his favorite easy chair, threw off his overcoat an i leaned back.

"Quest," he pronounced, "you are the best friend I have in my life! It is you who have rid me of my great master, Prof. Edgar Ashleigh, at the cost of my peace of mind, my happiburden. Tell me—help me a little with my story—have you read that page from the Medical Journal which



The Professor Sat There Like a Fig-Craig has kept locked up all these

"We have all read it," Quest re-

plied. "It was forged," the professor declared, firmly, "forged by Craig. All the years since he has blackmailed me. I have been his servant and his tool. I have been afraid to speak. At last I am free of him. Thank God!"

tracecous culming to help him in his crimes. He wanders about in the dark, wearing a black velvet suit with holes for his eyes, and leaving only his hands exposed. I have watched him come into a half-dark-"Craig, after all," French muttered. Lenora stood a little apart with a faint frown upon her forehend. She touched Quest on the shoulder.
"Mr. Quest," she murmured, "he is

lying!" Quest turned his head. His lips scarcely moved.

"What do you mean?" he whispered.
"He is lying!" Lenors insisted. "I
tell you there's another creature
there, something we don't understand.
Let me bring the electro-thought transference apparatus; let us read his mind. If I am wrong, I will go down on my knees and beg for for-

Siviness."
Quest nodded, "Lenora hastened to the farther end of the room, anatoned to the cloth from the instrument and wheeled down the little mirror with



"He is Dead!" Quest Declared.

its colls and levers. watched her. Slowly his face changed. The benevolence faded away, his teeth which was almost a snarl.
"You believe me?" he cried, turn-

ing to Quest. "You are not going to try that horrible thing on me-Proturning consciousness. He was gripfessor Lord Ashleigh? I am all broken ping at his collar. He seemed to have

"Professor," Quest said, sternly, "we are surrounded by the shadow of some terrible deeds for which as yet there is no explanation. I do not say that we mistrust you, but I ask you to submit to this test."

harshly.

"I refuse!" the professor replied. "And I insist," Quest muttered. The professor drew a little breath. He sat back in his chair. His face became still, his lips were drawn closely together. Lenora wheeled up the machine and with deft fingers adjusted the fittings on one side. Quest himself connected it up on the other. The professor sat there like a figure of stone. The silence in the room was so intense that the ticking of the small cleck upon the mantel piece was clearly audible. The very atmosphere seemed charged with the thrill and wonder of it. Never before had Quest met with resistance so com-plete and immovable. Sternly he con-centrated the whole of his will power upon his task. Almost at once there was a change. The professor fell back in the chair. The tenze self-control had passed from his features, his lips twitched. Simultaneously, just awakened from a dream

the mirror for a moment was clouded -then slowly a picture upon it gathered outline and substance. There was a jungle, strange, tall trees, and brushwood so thick that it reached to the waists of the two men who were slowly making their way through it. One was the professor, clearly recognizable under his white sun helmet; the other a stranger to all of them. Suddenly they stopped. The latter had crept a pard or so ahead, his gun raised to his shoulder, his eyes fixed upon some possible object of pursuit. There was a sudden change in the professor. They saw him seize his gun by the barrel and whirl it above his head. He seemed suddenly to lose his whole identity. He crouched on his haunches, almost like an animal, and sprang at the other's throat. They could almost hear the snarl from his lips as the two men went down together into the un-

dergrowth. The picture faded away. "Doctor Merrill!" Lenora faltered. "Then it was not wild beasts which killed him."

Almost immediately figures again appeared in the mirror. There was a small passage which seemed to lead from the back entrance of a house; the professor, with a black mantle, Craig followed him, pleading, expostu-lating. They saw the conservatory for a minute, and then blackness. The professor was leaning against a marble basin. There was nothing to be seen of him but his eyes and hands. They was him listen for a moment or two in cold unresponsive silence, then stretch out his hand and push Craig away. The picture glowed and feded and glowed again. Then they saw through the gloom the figure of a woman approach, a diamond neck-lace around her neck. They saw the hands steal out and encircle her throat—and then more darkness, silence, obscurity. The mirror was empty once more.

"Mrs. Rheinholdt's jewels!" Lenora cried. "What next? Oh! my God. what next?"

Their eyes ashed with the strain, but there was not one of them who could even glance away from the mir-ror. It was Quest's study which slowly appeared then. The Salvation Army girl was there, talking to the professor. They saw him leave her, they saw him look back from the door, a strange, evil grance. Then the door, a strange, eval grance. Then the secretary entered and spoke to her. Once more the door opened. The handle were there, stretching and reaching, a paper-weight gripped in the right-hand ingers. They saw it the right-hand in secretary's head they the right-hand ingers. They saw it raised above the secretary's head, they saw the other hand take the girl by the threat and push her towards the table. A wild scream broke from Lanors's lips. Quest wavered for a

The professor moment. The picture faded out.
is face changed.
it way, his teeth "Haven't we seen enough? We know "Haven't we seen enough? "Haven't we seen enough?" "Haven't we seen enough? "Haven't we seen enough." " for a moment showed in something the truth now. Stop it or I shall die!"
which was almost a snarl.

The criminologist made no reply. His eyes were still fixed upon the proap. I am not fit for it. Look at my disculty with his breathing. Quest hands, how they shake." Lenora back.

"One more," he muttered. "There's something growing in his mind. I can feel it. Wait!"

Again they all turned towards the mirror. They saw the hallway of Ashleigh house, the pictures upon the walls, they could almost feel the quiet silence of night. They saw the professor come stealing down the stairs He was wearing the black velvet suit with the cowl in his hand. They watched him pause before a certain door, draw on the cowl and disappear Through the opening they could see Lord Ashleigh asleep in bed, the moon light streaming through the open win dow across the counterpane. They saw the professor turn with a strange horrible look in his face and close the

door. Lenora burst into sobs.
"No more!" she shricked. more, or I shall go mad!" Quest leaned forward and released their victim. The whole atmosphere of the place seemed immediately to change. Lenora drew a long, convulsive breath and sank into a chair. The professor sat up and gazed at them all with the air of a man who has

"Have I, by any chance, slept?" he asked. "Or-

He never finished his sentence. His eyes fell upon the mirror, the metal band lying by his side. He read the truth in the faces still turned towards him. He rose to his feet. There was another and equally sudden change in his demeanor and tone. He carried himself with the calm dignity of the scientist. "The end of our struggle, I pre-

sume?" he said to Quest, pointing to the metal band. "You will at least admit that I have shown you fine sport." No one answered him. Even Quest had barely yet recovered himself. The professor shrugged his shoulders.

"I recognize, of course," he said. gravely, "that this is the end. A person in extremis has privileges. Will you allow me to write just a patter of twenty lines at your desk?"
Silently Quest assented. The profes-

sor scated himself in the swing chair, drew a sheet of paper towards him, dipped the pen in the ink and began to write. Then he turned around and reached for his own small black bag which lay upon the table. Quest caught him by the wrist.

What do you want out of that, pro-

fessor?" he inquired. "Merely my own pen and ink," the professor expostulated. "If there is anything I detest in the world, it is violet ink. And your pen, too, is ex-ecrable. As they are to be the last words I shall leave to a sorrowing world, I should like to write them in my own fashion. Open the bag for yourself, if you will. You can pass me the things out."

Quest opened the bag, took out a pen and a small glass bottle of ink. He handed them to the professor, who started at once more to write. watched him for a moment and then turned away to French. The profes sor looked over his shoulder and suddenly bared his wrist. Lenora seized her employer by the arm.
"Look!" she cried. "What is he go

ing to do?"

Quest swung around, but he was too late. The professor had dug the pen into his arm. He sat in his chair and laughed as they all hurried towards him. Then suddenly he sprang to his Again the change came into his face which they had seen in the mirror. French dashed forward to-wards him. The professor snarled, seemed about to spring, then suddenly once more stretched out his hands to show that he was helpless and handed to tquest the paper upon which he had "You have nothing to fear from me,"

he exclaimed. "Here is my last measure to you, Sanford Quest. Read it— rend it aloud. Always remember that this was not your triumpl, but mine."

Quest held up the paper. They all ead. The professor's letters were carefully formed, his handwriting perfectly legible:

You have been a clever opponent, Sanford Quest, but even now you are to be cheated. The wisdom of the ages outreaches yours, outreaches it and

Quest looked up quickly. "What the devil does he mean?" he muttered.

The professor's arms shot suddenly above his head. Again that strange animal look convulsed his features. He burst into a load, unnatural laugh. "Mean, you fool?" he eried, holding

out his wrist, which was slowly turning black. "Poisoned! That is what it means!" They all stared at him. seized the ink bottle, revealed the false top and laid it down again with a little exclamation. Then, before they could realize it the end came. The professor lay, a crumpled-up heap, upon the floor.

Quest swung round in his chair as French entered the room and held out his left hand.

"Glad to see you, French. Help yourself to a cigar." "L don't know as I want to smoke

this morning just at present, thank ou," French replied. "Nothing wrong, ch?"
"The fact of it is," French explained,

"I should like a few words with Miss Laura. Quest laughed shortly.

"Why on earth couldn't you say so?" he observed. "Never knew you bashful before, inspector. She's up in the laboratory. I'll ring for someone to show you the way." Quest touched the bell and his new

secretary entered almost at once. Take Inspector French up into the laboratory," Quest directed. See you

later, French." "Yes-perhaps-I hope so," the in-

quest watched him disappear with puzzled smile. Then he sat down at his desk, drew a sheet of paper towards him and began to write: My Dear Inspector:

I am taking this opportunity of let-ting you know that out of deference to the wishes of the woman I hope soon to marry, I am abandoning the hazardous and nerve-racking profession of criminology for a safer and nappler career. You will have, therefore, to find help elsewhere in the future. With best wishes. Yours,

SANFORD QUEST.

He left the sheet of paper upon the desk and, ringing the bell, sent for Lenora.. She appeared in a few moments and came over to his side.
"What is it, Mr. Quest?" she asked.

He gave her the letter without re-mark. She read it through and, turning slowly around, looked at him expectantly.

"How's that seem to you?" he asked, reaching out his hand for a ca tar. "Very sensible, indeed," she replied.



The Sound of a Human Voice Seemed to Produce a Strange Effect. agree with me there, con't you, Len-

"Yes!" she admitted, a little faintly. The secretary entered the room, helped Quest on with his coat and handed him his hat.

"If you are quite ready, Lenora."
"Ready!" she exclaimed. "Wher are we going?"

Quest sighed. "Fancy having to explain all these things!" he said, taking her arm. "I just want you to understand, Lenora. that I've waited—quite long enough. Parkins," he added, turning to his secretary, "if anyone calls, just say that my wife and I will be back early in the afternoon. And you'd better step upstairs to the laboratory and

step upstairs to the laboratory and give my compliments to Inspector French, and say that I hope he and Miss Lanra will join us at Delhouvico's for luncheon at one o'clock."

"Very good, sir," the man replied. Lenora's face was suddenly transformed. She passed her arm through Quest's. He stooped and kissed her as he led her towards the door.

"You understand now, don't you?" he whispered, smiling down at her.

"I think so," she admitted, with a little sigh of content.

THE END.

Don't Fail To See The Great Serial Picture

Today Last Episode

The

Bijou Theatre